



## **THE STORY OF KALI-YUGA'S APPEARANCE**

It is explained that due to Sri Krishna's spiritual power the effects of the deteriorating age of Kali were held back until after Krishna left this planet. But even before Lord Krishna left this world, as related in the *Brahma Purana* (101.29-35), they saw evil omens in the sky and on earth that indicated that Krishna was about to leave. Krishna predicted that when the Yadava dynasty was finished and they abandoned His

island city of Dwaraka, the sea would engulf it and He would leave this world for His own abode. Thus, He arranged that He and the Yadava family go to Prabhasa on the coast of present-day Gujarat where they became involved in a fierce fight with each other until all of the Yadavas were killed. After that, Krishna rested under a tree contemplating His departure from this material realm.

The *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (starting at 11.30.28) relates that when Lord Krishna began to wrap up His pastimes in this universe, it was arranged by His energy that as He sat under a *pippala* tree, resting His left foot with its lotus red sole on His right thigh, a hunter would see His foot and mistake it for the face of a deer. The hunter, Jara, aimed and shot his arrow at Krishna's foot. When Jara went to have a closer inspection, he realized his mistake. Jara saw Sri Krishna in His four-armed form, exhibiting His brilliant effulgence that dissipated the darkness in all directions. A beautiful smile graced His lotus face that displayed His attractive lotus eyes. He wore bracelets, arm ornaments, necklaces, the Kaustubha jewel, flower garlands, and other royal emblems. The Supreme, whose body is composed of eternity, knowledge, and bliss, was accompanied by His weapons who stood next to Him in their personal, embodied forms. Thus, even His weapons took on their spiritual forms, ready to return with the Lord to the spiritual world. These associates consisted of Krishna's lotus flower, conch shell, club, and disc.

When Jara saw the four-armed form of the Supreme, he was immediately terrified of his offense. He placed his head upon the feet of Krishna and asked for forgiveness. Krishna replied that he should not fear. What has been done was by His own desire, and Jara could go to the spiritual world. Krishna then sent His charioteer to tell the residents of Dwaraka, His island capital, to leave since it would sink under the ocean after His departure from this planet.

Soon many demigods and higher beings appeared on the scene to witness the departure of the Supreme from this world. As they glorified Him, the sky became crowded with their many airplanes. Then Sri Krishna closed His eyes, fixed His mind within Himself, and entered His own spiritual abode. Many demigods could not see Krishna entering His abode, just as ordinary men cannot understand the path of a lightning bolt. Nevertheless, some did manage to catch a glimpse of His movements and were extremely amazed. In this way, the Supreme enters the universe after creating it. He plays with it for some time like, an actor in a play, and then leaves the cosmic manifestation for His own abode.

Upon Krishna's departure, the qualities of truth, religion, faithfulness, glory, and beauty immediately followed Him. For this reason, the influence of Kali could enter this planet and become stronger. In summary, the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (12.2.29-34) explains that when the Supreme Lord, Krishna, who is brilliant as the sun, returned to the spiritual strata, Kali entered this world and the general populace began to enjoy various sinful activities. As long as Lord Krishna was on this planet, Kali could not manifest his influence. However, when the constellation of the seven sages, the constellation of *Ursa Major* to Western astronomers, is passing through the lunar mansion of Magha, that is the time when the age of Kali begins. Kali-yuga lasts twelve centuries of the demigods, or 432,000 earth years. When the great sages of the Saptarshi constellation pass from Magha to Purvashadha, the age of Kali will have full strength, beginning from the time of King Nanda. Those in knowledge declare that when Lord Krishna departed from this world to His spiritual abode, the age of Kali began. It is further predicted that after one thousand years of the celestial region, the age of Satya-yuga will begin again with the advent of Lord Kalki.

The symptoms that designate the beginning of the age of Kali-yuga are described in the *Puranas*. The *Bhagavat Purana* (starting at 1.4.16) states that at the beginning of Kali-yuga the great sage Vyasadeva sat in meditation near his cottage. He could see the past, present, and future due to his being a liberated soul. Vyasadeva could see the deterioration of everything material. People would be reduced in their duration of life and would be impatient, angry, and always disturbed. Because of ignorance, people will not understand the purpose of life. They become overly attracted to the temporary glitter of materialism, reducing their ability to attain spiritual understanding. This keeps them preoccupied with that which wastes their life, and it makes them reluctant to find and hear about genuine spiritual knowledge. Therefore, Vyasadeva wanted to arrange for the progressive life of the people of this age. Thus, he divided the four Vedas into many branches to allow people to understand this spiritual knowledge more easily.

It was also at this time, 5,000 years ago as described in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (starting at 1.14.1), when the battle of Kuruksetra had ended and Maharaja Yudhisthira had been installed as the king of the land. Arjuna, Krishna's close friend, had gone to Dwaraka to see Lord Krishna. Maharaja Yudhisthira was waiting for Arjuna to return to hear the latest news. Arjuna, however, did not return and Yudhisthira began to see inauspicious and fearful omens in his kingdom. He began to feel

anxious about Arjuna and the well-being of Dwaraka. He suspected that Lord Krishna had left this world.

Yudhisthira began to see disruptions in the seasonal tendencies, such as winter appearing in summer and vice versa. Becoming overly greedy, angry, and deceitful, people began to adopt foul livelihoods. Ordinary dealings, even between friends, became affected by cheating. In family affairs were always misunderstandings, strain, and quarrel, even between husband and wife. People became accustomed to greed, anger, pride, and hypocrisy, all of which became rampant throughout society. Yudhisthira was astonished to see all these symptoms of Kali-yuga. [This means, of course, that none of these symptoms were previously present in the kingdom of Maharaja Yudhisthira. So we can only imagine how pleasant a kingdom it was before the qualities of Kali began to infiltrate into the lives of the people at that time.]

As Yudhisthira looked around, he could see the she-jackel crying at the rising sun, dogs barked at him fearlessly, and the owls and crows shrieked. Smoke circled in the air and there were cloudless thunder bolts from the sky. The earth and mountains were quaking as never before. Violent winds blasted dust everywhere creating darkness. Clouds appeared and it rained as the sun grew dark. The stars seemed to be fighting among themselves in the sky. Confused living entities were weeping, and all rivers, ponds, and tributaries were perturbed. The cows no longer gave milk nor did the calves suck the teats. They were all crying with tears in their eyes, and bulls were not going to the pasturing grounds.

The Deities in the temples seemed to cry, lament, and perspire. All cities, towns, and gardens were dark, without beauty and happiness. Yudhisthira asked himself, "What is happening in this extraordinary time? What sorts of calamities await us?"

Just then Arjuna returned from Dwaraka and informed Maharaja Yudhisthira that Lord Krishna had indeed left this world. As stated in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (1.15.36), when Lord Krishna disappeared from this universe, from that day Kali became fully manifest to create inauspicious conditions for those endowed with a poor fund of knowledge.

Maharaja Yudhisthira, recognizing the effects of Kali-yuga in the form of increasing avarice, falsehood, cheating, and violence throughout his kingdom--all that is so common today--prepared to leave home and enthroned his grandson, Maharaja Pariksit, as the new king. Then he

purified his consciousness and, shortly after that, left this world and attained the spiritual strata.

In *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (First Canto, Chapter Seventeen) it is explained that as Maharaja Pariksit ruled the world, he once met the personality of Kali-yuga. Although lower than a shudra (a low-classed and uncultured man), Kali was disguised as a king, but was beating the legs of a cow and bull. Maharaja Pariksit grabbed the culprit to kill him. Pariksit told the man that though he was dressed as a king, he was beating those who are helpless in Pariksit Maharaja's kingdom. Therefore, Kali, quarrel personified, was considered a culprit and deserved to be killed.

As Maharaja Pariksit took up his sword to kill the personality of Kali, who is the cause of all irreligious and misfortune, Kali immediately gave up the disguise of a king and surrendered to Pariksit with bowed head. Being kind, Maharaja Pariksit did not kill Kali, but told him that he had to leave the kingdom since Kali was a friend of irreligion. With Kali's presence irreligious principles like greed, falsehood, robbery, incivility, treachery, misfortune, cheating, quarrel, and vanity will abound.

In fear, Kali responded by requesting the king to fix some place where he could live permanently under the protection of Maharaja Pariksit's government. Maharaja Pariksit gave Kali permission to reside in places where gambling, drinking, prostitution, and animal slaughter were performed.

These are the basic principles of irreligion. Wherever they are found lies the basis of activities that further the development of Kali-yuga and the deterioration of human civilization. For example, animal slaughter takes away one's sense of mercy and compassion for others. It promotes selfishness and cruelty and furthers society's ignorance of its spiritual identity. Prostitution or frivolous sexual activity takes away one's sense of bodily and mental cleanliness. It increases addiction to trivial bodily pleasures, which accelerates degradation and disease in society. Drinking or intoxication literally poisons the brain and body. It takes away the ability to achieve a higher consciousness and destroys the principle of austerity, being responsible and focused on the goals of life. This leads to irresponsibility and a philosophy of "whatever feels good, do it." Such intoxication paves the way for further calamities in one's actions and difficulties in life. Gambling, or engaging in questionable or fraudulent business practices, takes away the principle of truthfulness and honesty. Anyone, such as rulers, social leaders, or

religionists, who desire progressive well-being for themselves and society should avoid these four irreligious principles. All of these eliminate the finer characteristics of human nature, which leaves behind the lower animalistic qualities and the further degradation of human society and the world.

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